

## **HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AFTER A FLOOD**

### **Furniture, Walls, Ceilings and Floors**

- Open doors and windows and use fans or dehumidifiers to dry out the building; do not use central heating system until it is cleaned (see below).
- Remove all porous items that have been wet for >48 hours and that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried. (such as carpeting and carpet padding, upholstered or wood furniture, wallpaper, drywall, ceiling tiles, and insulation material)
- Clean salvageable wet items and surfaces with detergent and water to prevent mold growth.

### **Household Items**

- Nonporous items (e.g., dishes, pots, glass items, and hard plastic items) do not need to be discarded, but should be cleaned if they came in contact with flood water. Use a hot setting to wash your pots, pans, dishes, and utensils; if your dishwasher was flooded, clean and disinfect it before use.
- Porous items (e.g., cloth items that cannot be washed, some wood and wood products, and soft plastic) should be discarded because they probably absorbed whatever contaminants were in the floodwaters.
- Throw away canned foods that are bulging, opened, or damaged. Food containers with screw-caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, snap-open, and home-canned foods should be discarded if they have come into contact with floodwater because they cannot be disinfected.
- If intact cans have come in contact with floodwater or storm water, remove the labels, wash the cans, and dip them in a solution of 1 cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Re-label the cans with a marker.

### **Clothes and Textiles**

- Before using a washing machine that was in a flooded building, run the machine through one full cycle before washing clothes. Use hot water and a disinfectant or sanitizer.
- Take clothes and linens outdoors and shake off any dried mud or dirt before washing them. Hose off muddy items to remove all dirt before putting them in the washer.
- If the clothing items are only wet, they can be laundered normally. Wash them in detergent and warm water if possible, or take them to a professional cleaner. Adding chlorine bleach to the wash cycle will remove most mildew and will sanitize the clothing. However, bleach might fade some fabrics and damage other fabrics. If the label reads "dry clean only," shake out loose dirt and take the item to a professional cleaner.
- Consult a remediation professional for advice on whether heavily mold-contaminated items made of leather, suede, or a similar material are salvageable or should be discarded.

### **Cleaning a Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System**

- All surfaces of an HVAC system and all its components that were submerged during a flood should be thoroughly inspected, cleaned of dirt and debris, and disinfected by a qualified professional prior to use.
- If HVAC systems are not properly cleaned and disinfected, mold and other microorganisms might spread throughout the building and can cause a variety of adverse health effects to the building's occupants.